

Translated from Arabic

[PM/2019/216]

Identical letters dated 16 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to draw to your attention the following information.

With reference to certain statements made by the United Nations and briefings presented by representatives of the Secretariat to the Security Council, in which it has been alleged that the Syrian Arab Army and its allies have targeted hospitals and health-care centres in Idlib Governorate, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes again to emphasize that those allegations are false. Indeed, the efforts of the Syrian Government and its allies to combat terrorism are directed at protecting civilians, public and private property and the development gains achieved by the Syrian people from the scourge of terrorism, which, unfortunately, is backed by the Governments of certain States Members of the United Nations.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to inform you that the hospitals and health-care centres in Idlib Governorate listed below have been out of commission since being taken over by terrorist groups, first and foremost among them Nusrah Front, which is the military wing of Al-Qaida in Syria. They no longer serve their original purpose and cannot be considered hospitals, health-care centres or even “civilian objects” under humanitarian law, as they have been converted by the armed terrorist groups into military posts, prisons, arms depots, workshops for manufacturing weapons and explosives, sharia courts and launch pads from which to shell and fire rockets at residential districts and safe areas:

1. Idlib National Hospital has been out of commission since March 2015.
2. Ibn Sina Hospital has been out of commission since March 2015.
3. Ma'arrat al-Nu'man Hospital has been out of commission since October 2012.
4. Jisr al-Shughur National Hospital has been out of commission since April 2015.
5. The Integrated Clinical Centre has been out of commission since March 2015.
6. Another 114 health-care centres stopped functioning at different times as terrorist groups took control of them.
7. The ambulance network has been completely knocked out, with 33 ambulances stolen by the terrorists for use as car bombs or in terrorist operations against the army and civilians.
8. All health-care facilities in Idlib Governorate have been rendered inoperative since the terrorist groups overran them and ransacked or stole their equipment.

The armed terrorist groups continue their criminal practices, including the targeting of hospitals and health-care centres in safe areas with rockets and mortar fire, as recently witnessed in the cities of Masyaf, Suqaylibiyah and Muhradah. Terrorist groups also detain civilians, including patients in need of treatment, in areas under their control and use some as human shields or bargaining chips or to attract media attention. They also prevent them from reaching safe areas for medical treatment.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again calls on the Security Council to ensure full compliance with its counter-terrorism resolutions, to take resolute action to deter the Governments of States known to support terrorism targeting the Syrian Arab Republic and to bring them to account for their actions.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative